

§ 1780.69 [Reserved]

§ 1780.70 Owner's procurement regulations.

Owner's procurement requirements must comply with the following standards:

(a) *Code of conduct.* Owners shall maintain a written code or standards of conduct which shall govern the performance of their officers, employees or agents engaged in the award and administration of contracts supported by Agency funds. No employee, officer or agent of the owner shall participate in the selection, award, or administration of a contract supported by Agency funds if a conflict of interest, real or apparent, would be involved. Examples of such conflicts would arise when: the employee, officer or agent; any member of their immediate family; their partner; or an organization which employs, or is about to employ, any of the above; has a financial or other interest in the firm selected for the award.

(1) The owner's officers, employees or agents shall neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors or anything of monetary value from contractors, potential contractors, or parties to subagreements.

(2) To the extent permitted by State or local law or regulations, the owner's standards of conduct shall provide for penalties, sanctions, or other disciplinary actions for violations of such standards by the owner's officers, employees, agents, or by contractors or their agents.

(b) *Maximum open and free competition.* All procurement transactions, regardless of whether by sealed bids or by negotiation and without regard to dollar value, shall be conducted in a manner that provides maximum open and free competition. Procurement procedures shall not restrict or eliminate competition. Examples of what are considered to be restrictive of competition include, but are not limited to: placing unreasonable requirements on firms in order for them to qualify to do business; noncompetitive practices between firms; organizational conflicts of interest; and unnecessary experience and bonding requirements. In specifying materials, the owner and its consultant will consider all materials nor-

mally suitable for the project commensurate with sound engineering practices and project requirements. The Agency shall consider fully any recommendation made by the owner concerning the technical design and choice of materials to be used for a facility. If the Agency determines that a design or material, other than those that were recommended should be considered by including them in the procurement process as an acceptable design or material in the water or waste disposal facility, the Agency shall provide such owner with a comprehensive justification for such a determination. The justification will be documented in writing.

(c) *Owner's review.* Proposed procurement actions shall be reviewed by the owner's officials to avoid the purchase of unnecessary or duplicate items. Consideration should be given to consolidation or separation of procurement items to obtain a more economical purchase. Where appropriate, an analysis shall be made of lease versus purchase alternatives, and any other appropriate analysis to determine which approach would be the most economical. To foster greater economy and efficiency, owners are encouraged to enter into State and local intergovernmental agreements for procurement or use of common goods and services.

(d) Solicitation of offers, whether by competitive sealed bid or competitive negotiation, shall:

(1) Incorporate a clear and accurate description of the technical requirements for the material, product or service to be procured. When it is impractical or uneconomical to make a clear and accurate description of the technical requirements, a "brand name or equal" description may be used to define the performance or other salient requirements of a procurement. The specific feature of the name brands which must be met by the offeror shall be clearly stated; and

(2) Clearly specify all requirements which offerors must fulfill and all other factors to be used in evaluating bids or proposals.

(e) Affirmative steps should be taken to assure that small, minority, and women businesses are utilized when

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possible as sources of supplies, equipment, construction and services.

(f) *Contract pricing.* Cost plus a percentage of cost method of contracting shall not be used.

(g) *Unacceptable bidders.* The following will not be allowed to bid on, or negotiate for, a contract or sub-contract related to the construction of the project:

(1) An engineer as an individual or firm who has prepared plans and specifications or who will be responsible for monitoring the construction;

(2) Any firm or corporation in which the owner's engineer is an officer, employee, or holds or controls a substantial interest;

(3) The governing body's officers, employees, or agents;

(4) Any member of the immediate family or partners in the entities referred to in paragraphs (g)(1), (g)(2) or (g)(3) of this section; or

(5) An organization which employs, or is about to employ, any person in the entities referred to in paragraphs (g)(1), (g)(2), (g)(3) or (g)(4) of this section.

(h) *Contract award.* Contracts shall be made only with responsible parties possessing the potential ability to perform successfully under the terms and conditions of a proposed procurement. Consideration shall include but not be limited to matters such as integrity, record of past performance, financial and technical resources, and accessibility to other necessary resources. Contracts shall not be made with parties who are suspended or debarred by any Agency of the United States Government.

§ 1780.71 [Reserved]

§ 1780.72 Procurement methods.

Procurement shall be made by one of the following methods: Small purchase procedures; competitive sealed bids (formal advertising); competitive negotiation; or noncompetitive negotiation. Competitive sealed bids (formal advertising) is the preferred procurement method for construction contracts.

(a) *Small purchase procedures.* Small purchase procedures are those relatively simple and informal procurement methods that are sound and ap-

propriate for a procurement of services, supplies or other property, costing in the aggregate not more than \$100,000. If small purchase procedures are used for a procurement, written price or rate quotations shall be requested from at least three qualified sources.

(b) *Competitive sealed bids.* In competitive sealed bids (formal advertising), an invitation for sealed bids is publicly advertised and a firm-fixed-price contract (lump sum or unit price) is awarded to the responsible bidder whose bid, conforming with all the material terms and conditions of the invitation for bids, is lowest, price and other factors considered. When using this method the following shall apply:

(1) The invitation for bids shall be publicly advertised at a sufficient time prior to the date set for opening of bids. The invitation shall comply with the requirements in §1780.70(d). Bids shall be solicited from an adequate number of qualified sources;

(2) All bids shall be opened publicly at the time and place stated in the invitation for bids;

(3) A firm-fixed-price contract award shall be made by written notice to that responsible bidder whose bid, conforming to the invitation for bids, is lowest. When specified in the bidding documents, factors such as discounts and transportation costs shall be considered in determining which bid is lowest; and

(4) Any or all bids may be rejected by the owner when it is in its best interest.

(c) *Competitive negotiation.* In competitive negotiations, proposals are requested from a number of sources and the Request for Proposal is publicized. Negotiations are normally conducted with more than one of the sources submitting offers. Competitive negotiation may be used if conditions are not appropriate for the use of formal advertising and where discussions and bargaining with a view to reaching agreement on the technical quality, price, other terms of the proposed contract and specifications may be necessary. If competitive negotiation is used for a procurement, the following requirements shall apply:

(1) Proposals shall be solicited from an adequate number of qualified